

Since the 1830s, Members of Congress have enjoyed meeting, talking with, and nominating these superb young people to our military academies. But how did this process evolve? In 1843, when West Point was the sole academy, Congress ratified the nominating process and became directly involved in the makeup of our military's leadership. This was not an act of an imperial Congress bent on controlling every aspect of Government. Rather, the procedure still used today was, and is, a further check and balance in our democracy. It was originally designed to weaken and divide political coloration in the officer corps, provide geographical balance to our armed services, and to make the officer corps more resilient to unfettered nepotism and handicapped European armies.

In 1854, Representative Gerritt Smith of New York added a new component to the academy nomination process—the academy review board. This was the first time a Member of Congress appointed prominent citizens from his district to screen applicants and assist with the serious duty of nominating candidates for academy admission. Today, I am honored to continue this wise tradition in my service to the 11th Congressional District.

The Academy Review Board is composed of six local citizens (several of whom are distinguished veterans) who have shown exemplary service to New Jersey, to their communities, and to the continued excellence of education in our area. Though from diverse backgrounds and professions, they all share a common dedication that the best qualified and motivated graduates attend our academies. And, as true for most volunteer groups, their service goes largely unnoticed.

I would like to take a moment to recognize these men and women and thank them publicly for participating in this important panel. Being on the Board requires hard work and an objective mind. Members have the responsibility of interviewing upwards of 50 outstanding high school seniors every year in the academy review process.

The nomination process follows a general timetable. High school seniors mail personal information directly to the Military Academy, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy once they become interested in attending. Information includes academic achievement, college entry test scores, and other activities. At this time, they also inform my office of their desire to be nominated.

The academies then assess the applicants, rank them based on the data supplied, and return the files to my office with their notations. In late November, our Academy Review Board interviews all of the applicants over the course of two days. They assess a student's qualifications and analyze character, desire to serve, and other talents that may be hidden on paper.

This year the board interviewed 38 applicants. Nominations included 10 to the Naval Academy, 8 to the Military Academy, 5 to the Merchant Marine Academy, and 5 to the Air Force Academy—the Coast Guard Academy does not use the congressional nomination process. The recommendations are then forwarded to the academies by January 31, where admissions staff reviewed files and notified applicants and my office of their final decision on admittance.

As these highly motivated and talented young men and women go through the acad-

emy nominating process, never let us forget the sacrifice they are preparing to make: to defend our country and protect our citizens. This holds especially true at a time when our Nation is fighting the war against terrorism. Whether it is in Afghanistan, the Iraq, or other hot spots around the world, no doubt we are constantly reminded that wars are fought by the young. And, while our military missions are both important and sometimes dangerous, it is reassuring to know that we continue to put America's best and brightest in command.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2008, 11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NEW JERSEY

AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Chelsea A. Bailey, Chatham, Academy of Arts Science & Engineering.

Phillip XG Choy, Basking Ridge, Ridge H.S.

Kenneth A. Natelli, Andover, Lenape Valley H.S.

Ethan J. Proll, West Caldwell, Trinity Christian School.

William D. Thimmel, Pompton Plains, Don Bosco.

MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY

Michael C. Jones, Basking Ridge, Ridge H.S.

Leslie M. Martin, Parsippany, DePaul H.S.
Jack A. Morado, West Caldwell, St. Benedict's Prep.

Evan Prill, Boonton, Boonton H.S.

Matthew J. White, Bloomingdale, Butler H.S.

MILITARY ACADEMY

Brian P. Greely, Lake Hopatcong, Pope John XXIII.

Travis Hughes, Randolph, Randolph H.S.

Vincent J. Lally, Sparta, Sparta H.S.

James J. Mariani, Fairfield, West Essex H.S.

Mark E. McConnell, Lake Hopatcong, Jefferson H.S.

Alexander G. Pagoulatos, Basking Ridge, Ridge H.S.

Jason S. Rothamel, Basking Ridge, Ridge H.S.

Brendan J. Ward, Chatham, Chatham H.S.

NAVAL ACADEMY

William B. Brundage, New Vernon, The Pingry School.

Aaron Z. Dewitt, Mendham, W. Morris Mendham H.S.

Katherine S. Drainsfield, Bridgewater, Bridgewater-Raritan H.S.

Zachery R. Hoyt, Morristown, Delbarton School.

Anthony J. Kline, Boonton, Seton Hall Prep.

Kenneth L. Miltenberger, Mendham, Mendham H.S.

Kevin A. Petty, Succasunna, Roxbury H.S.

Colin R. Price, North Caldwell, Home School.

Nicholas G. Tepfenhart, Long Valley, West Morris Central.

David C. Wenger, Montville, Montville H.S.

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLARENCE CENTER VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

HON. THOMAS M. REYNOLDS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

Mr. REYNOLDS. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Clarence Center Volunteer Fire Company of Clarence, New

York. For a century the members of the Clarence Hose Company have been volunteering to protect their neighbors.

The Clarence Center Volunteer Fire Company became the first fire company in the Town of Clarence in 1908. The company began as a stock company and was able to purchase a hand drawn hose cart and chemical fire extinguishers. Land for a fire hall was donated to the Fire Company by a local businessman, and fundraising for the construction began in July 1908 with the First Firemen's picnic in Clarence. With the help of a local farmer, Wesley Williams, the Company raised enough money to construct Williams Hall.

The year 1922 marked a milestone for the Clarence Center Volunteer Fire Company. In February of this year the Company was able to purchase its first fire truck. The acquisition of this truck was important to the protection that the fire company offered the people in Clarence. Additionally, the first annual Labor Day Picnic was held in 1922. This is a time-honored event in the town of Clarence; not only is it a way for the fire company to raise funds for improvements to the equipment used to serve the people of Clarence, but it is an event that families throughout the town look forward to every year.

Since its beginnings the Clarence Volunteer Fire Company has become an indispensable part of the town. The Company remains committed to providing fire, rescue, and EMS services to the citizens that reside within the district boundaries. They've continued to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population of Clarence Center. As we reach the 100th anniversary of this fire company the volunteers continue to dedicate themselves to serve and assist the members of their community.

Thus Madam Speaker, in recognition of its 100th Anniversary of tremendous service in the Town of Clarence, I ask this honorable body join me in honoring the Clarence Center Volunteer Fire Company.

HONORING HRANT DINK

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Hrant Dink. He was a Turkish-Armenian journalist and a defender of the freedom of the press. His belief in this freedom never wavered despite his prosecution and conviction under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which makes it a crime to discuss the Armenian Genocide. Sadly, Mr. Dink's life was taken one year ago on January 19, 2007.

I am proud to cosponsor H. Res. 102, which condemns the assassination of Hrant Dink. This bill urges the Turkish government to continue to investigate and prosecute those responsible for Mr. Dink's murder and to protect the freedom of speech in Turkey by repealing Article 301. The repeal of this Article will ensure that Hrant Dink's legacy will live on and that his death will not have been in vain.